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SWEEPING WAR POWERS TO XI IN CHINA'S NEW DEFENCE LAW

Effective Jan 1, the decision-making powers on military policy rest with Xi Jinping-led Central Military Commission (CMC)

RIGHT TO MOBILISE MILITARY, CIVILIAN ASSETS

State Council – China's cabinet – will have a no say in defence matters as the revisions place sweeping powers in the hands of CMC to mobilise both military and civilian resources to defend its assets both in China and abroad. 'Disruption' and protection of 'development interests' added as grounds for mobilising and deploying troops and reserve forces | P11

PROVIDES LEGAL GROUND TO LAUNCH WAR

- Including 'development interests' provides legal grounds for the country to launch war to defend national development interests
- The CMC is now formally in charge of making national defence policy and principles, while the State Council becomes a mere implementing agency to provide support to the military

2 YEARS
TIME TAKEN BY THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS TO PASS THE LAW

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Nod to Covaxin triggers concern, political joust

Bharat Biotech's candidate yet to finish phase 3 trial, points out Oppn; bid to ridicule scientific community, says Nadda

A medic conducts a dry run of the Covid-19 vaccination on a health worker, at the Government Rajindra Hospital in Patiala on Sunday | PTI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@New Delhi

REGULATORY approvals for a couple of coronavirus vaccines on Sunday set off a political slugfest, with a section of the Opposition questioning the nod to Bharat Biotech's homegrown Covaxin, since it is yet to complete phase 3 trials. While Congress leaders sought full disclosure of Covaxin's data, BJP chief J P Nadda tore into the Opposition for coming up with "wild theories" to "ridicule" the accomplishments.

The Congress remained divided, with chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala hailing the scientific community, but deputy leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma, Jairam Ramesh and Shashi Tharoor asking searching questions on the haste in according approval to Covaxin.

The Congress troika demanded Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan's explanation on why mandatory protocols and verification of data had been done away for Covaxin. Soon enough, Vardhan reacted sharply, saying: "Disgraceful for anyone to politicise a critical issue."

Sharma, who heads the Parliamentary panel on the Ministry of Home Affairs, which had deliberated on the Covid-19 management plan, noted that the data on safety and efficacy has not been reviewed in the case of Covaxin.

Tharoor warned that the approval is premature, saying Covaxin's use should be avoided as it could be dangerous.

Union ministers Hardeep Singh Puri and Giriraj Singh took potshots at the Opposition. "Our in-house cynics M/s Jairam, Tharoor & Akhilesh are behaving true to form," tweeted Puri.

While Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and BSP head Mayawati lauded the scientific community, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, who on Saturday said he would not take a 'BJP vaccine', advised the government on Sunday to avoid a cosmetic approach. As for CPI (M) leader Sitaram Yechury, he called for full disclosure of data of the trial phases. P9

Experts question nod for vaccines

With the DCGI giving restricted emergency approval for Bharat Biotech's Covaxin and Serum Institute of India's Covishield, experts have raised concerns about lack of data in public domain with respect to the efficacy of these vaccines. The All India Drug Action Network on Sunday issued a statement questioning the grant of regulatory nod without complete data regarding the vaccines | P3

GOVT'S CASE

"COVAXIN is more likely to work against newer variants like N501Y Variant (UK variant) & any other that may arise due to antigenic drift as it contains immunogens (epitopes) from other genes in addition to those from Spike protein," says Harsh Vardhan

Covaxin is based on whole inactivated coronavirus; only 7 per cent persons receiving 6 microgram dose had mild symptoms

Covaxin data shows it not only produces antibodies in all participants but also sensitises 'CD4 T lymphocytes that imparts durable immune response, says Vardhan

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KIA Halt Railway Station in Bengaluru is all set to serve travelers from 4th January. This will go a long way in enhancing last-mile connectivity to Bengaluru airport, benefit lakhs of people – **Piyush Goyal**, Railway Minister

Starting Monday, Bengalureans can take a train to KIA, Devanahalli station. Trains will operate from Bengaluru city station to the newly built KIA, Devanahalli Railway halt station. –**B S Yediyurappa**, Chief Minister

Bengaluru int'l airport gets much-awaited rail link today

S LALITHA @Bengaluru

BY the time you read this, a Diesel Electric Multiple Unit (DEMU) (Train no. 06285) will have made its historic first run from the Krantivira Sangolli Rayanna (KSR) Bengaluru City railway station to Devanahalli, after halting at the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) Halt Station. The new rail service offers a more convenient option for air passengers to reach the international airport.

The train leaves KSR Bengaluru station at 4.45 am on Monday and touch KIA halt station at 5.50 am, before terminating at Devanahalli. The eight-coach train can carry a maximum of 2,402 passengers, and the cost of a ticket is just Rs 15 from the City railway station to the airport station. Enroute, it will stop at Bengaluru Cantonment, Bengaluru East, Baiyappanahalli, Channasandra, Yelahanka, Bettahalasur and Doddajala, and will run six days a week.

SHUTTLE SERVICES TO AIRPORT

The Bangalore International Airport Ltd plans to run shuttle service to ferry passengers to and from Kempegowda International Airport and the KIA halt station.

The KIA halt station, nearly 4 km from the airport, located between Yelahanka and Devanahalli railway stations, was supposed to be ready by December 2019. Nevertheless, it is set to make history as the only railway station in the country with Flight Information Display Systems that will help flyers know if their flight is on time or delayed as soon as they reach the station by train.

It will also have CCTV cameras, not usually found in halt stations. Apart from greenery around, it has beautiful artwork adorning the walls. All passenger amenities including ramp and special toilets for the disabled, restrooms for men and women, approach road, booking office, drinking water, cafeteria, granite benches and vending machines are made available.

Two more new DEMU services will also have a debut run on Monday to the halt station — one more from KSR in the evening and another from Yelahanka, while two trains already running since pre-Covid days, will also halt here. P2

The new train makes its first run to KIA Halt Station on Monday | EXPRESS

DVS hospitalised after blood sugar level drops

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Chitradurga/Bengaluru

UNION Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers, **D V Sadananda Gowda,** was rushed to a hospital in Chitradurga around 1.45 pm on Sunday after he collapsed at Naveen Regency hotel where he stopped for lunch. The 67-year-old Union minister was returning to Bengaluru from Shivamogga after attending the BJP state executive committee meeting. He had stopped for refreshments when his sugar levels dropped and he suddenly collapsed.

According to sources close to Gowda, he was doing well at the Shivamogga party convention, but as he was late for lunch, he developed hypoglycemia. He was immediately rushed to the nearby Basaveshwara Medical College and Hospital in an escort vehicle, where he was given preliminary treatment.

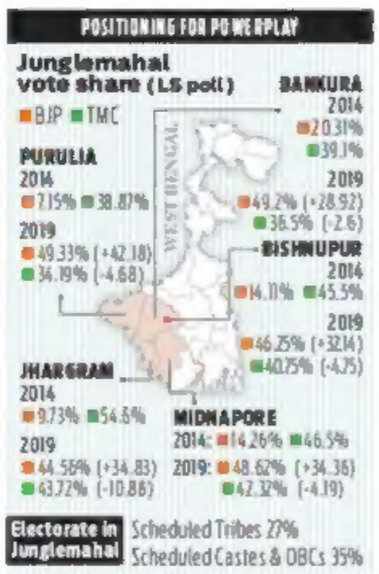
Officials who were accompanying the minister said that he was out of danger and his sugar levels had normalised. "However, we are getting him admitted to a private hospital in Bengaluru," they said.

The family immediately decided to shift him to Bengaluru and zero traffic was arranged by the state police for the ambulance carrying Gowda. By evening, he was brought to Aster CMI hospital in Bengaluru where his blood sugar levels are being monitored by a team of endocrinologists.

A statement from Aster CMI Hospital said, "D V Sadananda Gowda, Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India, was brought to Aster CMI hospital at 4:45 pm on Sunday. His condition is stable and he will be kept under observation for the next 24 hours."

His wife Daty Gowda and other party workers were seen near the hospital on Sunday evening. Gowda's personal staff said, "He is talking to people and is fine."

The minister had taken part in the BJP state executive committee meeting at Shivamogga, which was attended by Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, RDPR minister K S Eshwarappa, state BJP president Nalin Kumar Kateel and other senior party leaders.



SPOILERS THREATEN TO MUDDLE POLL PLAY IN BENGAL AND ASSAM

PRANAB MONDAL & PRASANTA MAZUMDAR
@Kolkata/Guwahati

CALL them spoilers, proxies or B-teams, with Assembly elections in West Bengal and Assam just months away, two political parties have thrown their hat in the ring, one in each state, with the sole aim of damaging bigger and more established players.

While the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) has declared that it will contest the West Bengal elections, not for the first time though, newbie Asom Jatiya Parishad (AJP) has entered the fray in Assam. Most do not give them any chance and say they will be mere also-rans. But they are expected to be crucial tools in the hands of the serious contenders to play the role of a spoiler.

The JMM is expected to damage the chances of the BJP, benefiting the Trinamool Congress, as both are expected to vie for the votes of tribals, among whom the BJP has made major inroads recently. The AJP could do the same to the Asom Gana Parishad, a BJP ally, and this could be to the advantage of the Congress. Like the AGP, the new party's leadership comes mainly from former activists of the All-Assam Students' Union with regionalism being its ideological mooring.

Political circles in both the states believe the JMM and the AJP have been propped up by the Trinamool and the Congress respectively to do what the All-India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen did to the Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar last year. In the closely contested polls, Asaduddin Owaisi's party contested 14 seats in the Muslim-dominated areas, winning five.

Why the BJP believes the JMM is a Trinamool proxy is not far to seek. In the 2016 Assembly polls, JMM contested 23 seats, 14 of them in the tribal-dominated districts Jhargram, Purulia, Bankura and West Midnapore, popularly called Junglemahal. P10

MP drafting law to make vandals pay up

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bhopal

TAKING a leaf out of UP's book, Madhya Pradesh is drafting a stringent law with a provision to auction the properties of stone-pelters to recover damages caused to public property or individuals.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's decision comes close on the heels of three incidents of clashes between two communities during the Ram temple fundraising processions taken out in Ujjain, Indore and Mandsaur districts.

"Their act not only causes damage to properties, but also poses a risk to human lives. While peaceful protests are the right of the citizens, vandals and arsonists have to be severely dealt with," Chouhan said. When introduced, MP will become the second state after UP to have such a law.

CONTINUED ON: P10

SOURAV GANGULY

STABLE, DECISION ON FURTHER ANGIOPLASTY SOON

The health parameters of the BCCI president and former India captain, who underwent angioplasty after a "mild" heart attack, are normal, doctors said on Sunday. P10

3-YEAR-OLD DIES IN GP POLL CLASH AFTERMATH

RAMKRISHNA BADSESHI
@Kalaburagi

Political rivalry between supporters of the BJP and Congress, in the backdrop of the recent Gram Panchayat elections, has allegedly claimed the life of a three-year-old girl in Kalaburagi on Saturday night.

The child Bharati was with her mother who is lodged in the central jail here in connection with the clashes that broke out. Following the girl's death, Congress leaders and workers, led by MLAs Dr Ajay Singh (Jewargi), Kaneez Fatima (Kalaburagi-North), former MLCs Allamaprabhu Patil and Tippannappa Kamaknoor, and also the kin of the child, staged a dharna in front of the Gulbarga Institute Medical Sciences with the body from Sunday afternoon.

Speaking to *The New Indian Express*, Dr Singh said that they will continue their stir until the police department suspends Jewargi Police Sub-Inspector Manjunath Hugar for allegedly attacking Sangeeta, the mother, and the child too, which, he said had claimed her life. The party has also demanded that compensation be paid to the parents of the deceased child.

CONTINUED ON :P6

MLA Dr Ajay Singh interacts with protesters in Kalaburagi on Friday.

BACK TO BOOKS

Campuses await students, degree colleges to open soon

PEARL MARIA D'SOUZA
@Bengaluru

SOME campus buzz this! Degree colleges will start buzzing soon. And students will be returning to classrooms after months of staying home due to the pandemic.

When students of Classes 10 and 12 stepped into their schools after many months on Friday, they were welcomed with flowers and chocolates and claps. Chocolates and claps or not, degree students say they are excited, wary and full of nerves, returning to the campuses.

Higher Education Minister C N Ashwath Narayan is likely to announce by Wednesday the resumption of offline classes for all non-final year degree students by January 15. It will be back to campuses but with safety precautions in place.

However, some colleges, mainly affiliated to Bengaluru City University (BCU) and Rani Chennamma University in Belagavi, and a few others under the other 25 government universities across Karnataka, have already started functioning. A senior BCU official confirmed this to *TNIE*.

According to a top source in the higher education department, after observing these colleges conduct classes under strict Covid-19 safety norms, the government is now contemplating reopening offline classes for all degree colleges.

Several other colleges, who are yet to resume offline classes, are expecting a government order anytime soon.

The offline classes for final year students were allowed from November 17. And so far, the average attendance has been 60 per cent. "Attendance at Bangalore University has touched a 60-70 per cent on an average, with Arts being as low as 50 per cent, Science touching 80 per cent, and Commerce being in between," said BU Vice Chancellor K R Venugopal. P5

EXPRESS READ

23 dead, 15 hurt in roof collapse at Ghaziabad

Ghaziabad: Twenty-three people, most of them attending a funeral, were killed and 15 others injured when the roof of a shelter at a cremation ground in Uttar Pradesh's Muradnagar collapsed on Sunday, police said. Several people had taken shelter under the structure while it rained | P10

11 coal miners shot dead in Balochistan

Karachi: At least 11 coal miners from Pakistan's Shia Hazara community were killed and four others injured on Sunday by unidentified gunmen, who initially kidnapped them in Balochistan.

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